



The State of New Hampshire  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner  
March 26, 2008

The Honorable Judith Spang, Chairman  
House Resources, Recreation, and Development Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 305  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: SB 403, relative to the commission to study issues relative to groundwater withdrawals

Dear Chairman Spang:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 403 as amended by the Senate, which expands the duties of the Groundwater Commission and extends the Commission until 2010. The Department supports this bill.

SB 403 directs the Groundwater Commission to determine what role is appropriate for municipalities in permitting large groundwater withdrawals and instructs the Commission to seek input from municipalities and other appropriate entities in that determination. It also extends the Commission until 2010 and sets an interim final report date (November 30, 2008) to produce a final report on the issue of the appropriate role for municipalities.

The Department concurs that the issue of the appropriate municipal role warrants further consideration. It should be noted that HB 1353, which just passed the House and is now in the Senate, is also supported by the Department. In addition to the appropriate role of municipalities, HB 1353 directs the Commission to 1) study the criteria now used to determine if a large groundwater withdrawal can be approved and to consider if and how public benefit should also be considered; 2) develop a state-wide groundwater monitoring plan and 3) participate in the creation of educational materials that clarify the existing role and authorities of municipalities in groundwater withdrawal permitting. We believe that the Groundwater Commission is well suited to address all of these issues because the Commission is both well balanced and well educated on the complex subject of groundwater occurrence and protection in New Hampshire. The Commission members have clearly demonstrated their ongoing commitment to ensuring that New Hampshire's groundwater is managed in a sustainable and proactive manner.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on this bill. Please feel free to call me at 271-3503, or Sarah Pillsbury at 271-1168, if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,

  
for Thomas S. Burack  
Commissioner

cc: Senator Cilley  
Representative Spang  
Representative Moody  
Representative Beaulieu  
Representative Buco